

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Indiana's Safe Haven Law Protects Unwanted Newborns

*Safe Haven Locations: West Lafayette Police and Fire Depts.*

West Lafayette, IN – April 1st, 2012 – The City of West Lafayette and the West Lafayette Police and Fire Departments would like to announce the use of new Safe Haven signs. Citizens will notice the new signs posted on all West Lafayette fire stations and at the West Lafayette Police Department. The signs indicate a safe place for new mothers and fathers to drop off an unwanted infant while ensuring that the parents will not be prosecuted.

"Indiana's Safe Haven Law allows safety and permanency for children who are abandoned," said James Payne, Director of the Indiana Department of Child Services. "Innocent, but unwanted children no longer have to be left on doorsteps, or worse, in dumpsters. With hospitals, fire stations and police stations as drop-off points, a responsible adult can give up custody of an unharmed infant 45 days old or younger and they will not be prosecuted for abandonment. A child's life will be saved and for some parents, it might be the best decision they can make."

Statistics show the majority of abandoned infants are born to young, unwed mothers who hide their pregnancies and do not know what else to do. Parenthood at any age is a daunting responsibility; for a woman with few resources or support, the challenge can lead to panic and desperation. For the few who have exhausted all their options and do not know where else to turn, Indiana's Safe Haven Law provides a back-up plan to keep their infant safe.

This law does several things:

- Allows a distressed parent to give up an unwanted infant safely, legally and confidentially
- Protects the parent from arrest or prosecution for abandonment
- Requires no names or records
- Permits infants less than 45 days old to be given up at any hospital emergency room, fire station or police station in Indiana
- Makes medical treatment and social services available to the birth mother; and
- Puts the infant into the custody of the Department of Child Services, which places the infant in a foster or pre-adoptive home

If you know of someone who is pregnant and distraught over what to do, inform them about Indiana's Safe Haven law which allows the parent(s) to take their infant to the nearest hospital, fire station or police post.